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Garden Notes

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Issued by

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GSUPPOSE this issue of my Garden Notes should be called my "Thanksgiving Edition" for my garden experiences this year, from the early start of the blooming season in April until the last Peonies bloomed in July, have been such a joy to me, in comparison with those of last year when I spent most of the time in a sanitarium, that I really am thankful that I have been blessed with renewed health and vigor. Entertaining many friends in my garden, more than in any other year, added greatly to my pleasure, and the splendid bloom of both my Irises and Peonies makes me anxious to renew the publications of my Garden Notes, especially as many of my readers have written me that they missed the issues last year and have requested me to continue their publication.

I had an ambitious schedule planned, for I had hoped to see the Irises of Southern California in April, and work up as the season advanced, through the South and the Middle-West, and return to my own garden in time to catch its story of the blooming season. But a rush of work, brought about by the purchase of a farm to provide for an expansion of my garden, coupled with the fear that my health would not hold up under such a strenuous schedule, made me defer the plan until a future season. However, I did find time to run down to Nashville on a special invitation from Mr. Connell, and later to Freeport, Illinois, where I acted as one of the Judges at an exceptionally fine Iris Show.

In Nashville, which is an Iris city of the first class (Columbus, Ohio, being the only other one in my observation which approaches it in enthusiasm for the Irises), I visited many gardens and met many interesting flower lovers. Chancellor Kirkland of the Vanderbilt University and Dr. Glenn of the same institution—both have personal gardens, the kind in which they like to work with their own hands. The Chancellor is an Iris fan and he has a splendid collection of the world's best Irises and I was particularly interested in his seedlings of Dominion parentage, because of their splendid plant growth and vigor, for vigor is what this new strain needs. The Dominion seedlings in his garden have more strength, vigor, height,

and size than any others I have ever seen in the United States or in Europe.

Among many others was a Titan (Dominion) seedling which appeared larger and more vigorous than any Iris I have ever seen, and as the stalk and all the foliage were absolutely healthy and as the plant itself had made splendid increase, I could not help wishing that he may yet succeed in crossing this new plant with his original Dominion. This seedling of his has everything which Dominion lacks and Dominion has of course the one thing it lacks, color. If Chancellor Kirkland can now get the descendants of this new seedling to possess the right colors and retain the parent's vigor, he will have achieved that for which all breeders are striving.

Dr. Glenn has an excellent Iris garden, but I believe his heart is with his Peonies and he has by far the best Peony garden I have ever seen in the south. An article from his pen telling of the varieties which do best in his garden and including also the varieties which do not grow satisfactorily for him, would be most valuable to all new Peony enthusiasts of the south. Some varieties of Peonies grow far better in the south than others, and I for one wish I could advise my customers in the southern states what varieties to avoid, as well as those which they should plant.

Superintendent Connell has undoubtedly had a glorious time growing Iris seedlings and he has, I believe, between one and two acres of them, and he is so very modest that out of these acres of Irises he has selected only three varieties which he is willing to introduce with his name attached as the originator. Superintendent Connell's acres of Irises are just outside the city of Nashville and adjoin the estate of Mrs. Hale, of Belle Meade, and on this estate I found several gardens, one of them the most beautiful natural garden I have ever seen. This beautiful garden is of very irregular shape and contains probably about an acre of ground, and it has been most studiously and carefully planted with trees, shrubs, and plants, and yet it gives the effect of never having been planted at all. It looks as if it were a piece of adjoining woodland, and that it might be possible that no one had ever walked across or through its natural growth. It is the most restful garden I have ever visited, and although it shows no planting at all, yet I consider it the most successfully planted garden I have ever seen.

In another garden, a very formal one, on this same estate, I found the surprise, the thrill, the event, the one thing by which this trip will ever be remembered, a new Dominion seedling whose color approaches red, better, I believe, than any other Iris in the world. It is one of Mr.

Connell's originations, one of the three he is willing to have known as a "Connell Iris," and as I kept going back to see it time after time, I could not refrain from thinking what a beautiful picture a full size color plate of it would make in an Iris book or booklet, and how glad Iris enthusiasts would be to see it, and how each one of them would look forward to possessing a rhizome of it. I do not know when Mr. Connell will place it upon the market, but I am glad indeed to have had the pleasure of seeing it. I am sure that many other Iris lovers will be willing to make the trip to Nashville next year just to see this one Iris.

I was greatly pleased with my trip to Freeport. The city is, as all Iris enthusiasts know, the home of the Quality Gardens and so all of its citizens have a chance to see the best that has been produced in Irises. But it is also the home of Mrs. W. L. Karcher, who is not only an Iris and Peony enthusiast, but who is also a born leader in women's activities. She had complete charge of the arrangements for the Iris Show, and I believe it was the best staged, most artistically arranged Iris Show ever held in the United States. The only one I have ever seen which equaled it was the Iris Show of the Royal Horticultural Society of England which was held in the Society's own building, Vincent Square, London.

I hope the American Iris Society may some time hold its annual meeting in Freeport, so that its members can see how a show should be arranged, and see how a garden club under efficient leadership can bring the architectural beauties of the garden into the show room. The officers of the American Iris Society could well rely upon Mrs. Pattison, owner of the Quality Gardens, and upon Mrs. Karcher and the loyal members of her garden club to put on an Iris Show which would set the standard for years to come.

In my own garden I enjoyed one of the most satisfactory seasons of my entire experience. Nearly all of my late importations favored me with bloom, while many of the standard varieties gave proof that they were still worthy of a place in an Iris fancier's collection.

Germaine Perthuis (Millet) was one of the dozen or more very new Irises which excited the most comment. M. Millet tells us that it is a seedling from Souv. de Madame Gaudichau and although he does not tell us the name of the pollen parent, yet I would like to make a guess that it has a Dominion strain in it, for I saw Dominion in M. Millet's garden four years ago, and so he has had ample opportunity to make use of it. This new variety is not quite as tall as Cardinal, Duke of Bedford and Moa, but it is as tall as that other one of the four celebrated Dominion seedlings, Bruno, and it seemed to me to have both

Dominion form and Dominion substance. Its color can probably be described as a red mulberry-purple and I predict for it a very great popularity, and as it has no Ricardi strain in its parentage, it will probably be a very vigorous grower, and I believe also a rapid multiplier.

Souv. de Loetitia Michaud, also a Millet seedling, attracted as much attention as the variety I have just named. It is perhaps unfortunate that it has some Ricardi blood in it, but of the plants imported in the spring of 1925 I did not lose a single root, although this may be due to the fact that I covered them with a wooden box to keep off the excessive rains. This variety is tall (between thirty-six and forty-four inches) and the bloom is very large, in fact as large as any variety I have ever seen, and the color is a splendid shade of light blue. I believe that it will rank with the finest Irises in all the world, but on account of its height, it should probably be planted in front of shrubbery to avoid the bad effects of strong spring winds.

Micheline Charraire, another Millet seedling, probably also of Ricardi parentage, is white but not quite as pure in color as White Queen, and it is as large and as tall as Souv. de Loetitia Michaud. I believe it is by far the best white Iris in commerce on account of its height and the size of its bloom. I did not lose a single plant of it out of my 1925 importation, but I am sure that purchasers will be wise to give it the same careful planting and protection which have been recommended for all other Ricardi varieties. M. Millet is to be congratulated on all three of these seedlings for with his older variety, Souv. de Madame Gaudichau, he has the record of having introduced four of the greatest Irises in the world.

Le Grand Ferre (Cayeux) bloomed in great profusion this year. The plant is very tall and the bloom nearly as large as Souv. de Loetitia Michaud. The standards are of fawn-gray color and the falls are red-lilac, the edges of which match the standards. From my experience in colors gained in a dry goods store, I believe an artist would say that nature has painted Le Grand Ferre in pastel shades.

Cayeux's Jacqueline Guillot was nearly as tall and I believe drew more attention than Le Grand Ferre. The color is pure self lavender-blue and the beard is white, and it is, I believe, a distinct addition to the Iris world.

Cayeux's Eclaireur is in a class with Daphne, Rhein Nixe and B. Y. Morrison, but I am not altogether sure that it should displace any of these older varieties. I was more impressed with Imperator (Cayeux) whose blooms have a peculiar color which is an approach toward red through the brightest possible red-lilac.

Cayeux's Peau Rouge (translation "red skin") is very aptly named, for I believe that it is the best approach

toward red of any Iris I have yet seen in commerce.

Cardinal still holds its place in my estimation as the richest and best Iris I have ever seen, although Duke of Bedford, Bruno and Moa follow it very closely. All four of these Irises are noted for their size and perfect shape as well as substance and I have no doubt that the quality of Irises in the world will be very much improved through the use of these and other Dominion seedlings as parents for the Irises of the future.

As I have a larger stock of Mother of Pearl than of any other single variety, it is natural I should see more blooms of this than any other Iris and as the price at which it is now sold is a very popular one, I hope soon to hear that the world agrees with me that it is one of the very best of the light colored varieties. It has size, substance, color and height and when grown in clumps in front of shrubbery it makes an excellent landscape variety.

Of the standard varieties which are sold at popular prices and in which the newer Iris enthusiasts are particularly interested, we are able to say that Alcazar is one of the most outstanding on account of its height, size and color, and we believe that like the older varieties Iris King, Rhein Nixe, Clio, Pallida Dalmatica and Lohengrin, it has years of service ahead of it. Each one of this last named group of Irises has a particular field of usefulness and I believe everyone starting an Iris garden should have each of them in his collection. Five years ago, Opera at five dollars a root was a "Collector's" Iris, but it has multiplied rapidly and I am glad that this variety, which on account of its rich bright red violet color impressed me so favorably in the English and French gardens four years ago, can now be included in beginners' collections. Seminole is a taller variety of the same color.

Aside from the Dominion seedlings, Prospero was one of the three best Irises I saw in England four years ago; Asia and Ann Page were the other two, and if I remember correctly our little group of Americans thought that Prospero was the best of the three. Asia and Ann Page do not increase rapidly, and are consequently still held at prices which keep them in the "Iris Collector's" class, while Prospero is a regular guinea pig in multiplication, so that this one of the three great Irises of four years ago can now be sold at a popular price and I am glad my friends are approving my selection of it as one of the best Iris values.

Quaker Lady is a small Iris compared with Prospero, and yet its name is so appropriate to its colors that it retains its popularity and I am glad to tell beginners that I believe they will like to show it to their friends, and call their attention to the fact that a Quaker Lady of the old school would naturally select just such colors for her garments.

Here are several of the Irises which are just as appropriately named: Dawn, which has the colors of the eastern sky before the sun appears; Morning Splendor, a most excellent Iris whose rich red violet colors seen against the morning sun certainly convey the idea of splendor as well as anything in nature of similar size; Sunset, which has the rich golden colors of the west; Afterglow, which has the quiet, restful colors of the later evening hours; Moonlight, with its still more quiet and restful colors which so resembles its name that visitors who had heard of it, but had never seen it, were instantly able to select it from a mass planting; and last of all, Mother of Pearl, whose petals show the same iridescence we see in the shells from which attractive ornaments are made.

Dream, Mrs. Marian Cran, Georgia and Susan Bliss were the outstanding things among the varieties which approach pink through the Queen of May route, but Aphrodite, with its beautiful plain unveined pink lilac surface and cream white center, probably drew as much attention as all the others.

Leverrier was the tallest Iris in my garden this year.

Ideal and Viking were the two outstanding new blue Irises. Ideal is the larger of the two, and Viking has probably the very best color yet seen in a blue Iris.

Simonne Vaissiere impressed my field superintendent as being by far the best of the many Irises which have been heralded as being superior to Lord of June and I well remember that Mr. Cayeux told me that he also thought it was the best of its class which he had ever seen. Next to Lord of June, Ballerine has been the best selling variety of this particular color and it cannot be denied that this last named variety has the better standards.

Madame Abel Chatenay and Steepway are two Irises which deserve more recognition than they have so far received. Both of them have the kind of beauty which appeals far more in the specimen than in the mass, and I find that I like to carry a bloom of each of them with me as I walk through my garden.

Valencia, a new variety from California, pleased me very much and I found on it the same fine color we see on the Valencia oranges of its native state. I believe it has a future and I am propagating it. I have also placed Ramona, Argentina, Azulado, and Esplendido, which are all from the Carl Salbach garden of Berkeley, California, in the class which meets my approval for first year bloom and I will watch all of them with a great deal of interest next year.

The next issue of my Garden Notes will tell of the Peony blooming season in Van Wert. I hope to issue it within the next three weeks.

